

Patrice Michaels
STUDIO

Handbook

Patrice Michaels STUDIO

PATRICE MICHAELS, SOPRANO

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Credo

I teach in order to share my life's passions. I teach in order to help you find your life's passions. People who have found their passions know the freedom of discipline, respect others, and have opportunities to make contributions to the culture of humanity - perhaps even to the culture of the planet! If your passions live in my territory, I'll do my best to help you make a set of maps. If you can't find your passions in my vicinity, they do exist somewhere. It's your responsibility to find, develop and manifest them. Go with my love.

Required Reading for All Upon Entry to Studio

Nurtured by Love

Shinichi Suzuki ISBN 0 87487 584 6

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Learning Styles: Here are two different websites with quite different ways of processing data that you supply. Please complete the questionnaires and share the outcomes with me. These insights may help us communicate efficiently and enjoyably.

www.learning-styles-online.com

www.crc4mse.org/ILS/self_test.html

Studio Policies

Singer Life

In order to excel as a singer, you must care for your body's health even more carefully than an instrumentalist must care for her/his medium:

- Know your own personal average body temperature, and keep a thermometer in your room. If you believe you're becoming ill, check your temperature at reasonable intervals. If you have a fever, it is your responsibility to take action to cure your illness as soon as possible. Likewise, you must avoid infecting others.
- In 32-degree-and-below weather you will need a humidifier (preferably warm steam vapor) in your room, which must be cleaned frequently. You should use nasal passage protection (water soluble gel or Vaseline) daily.
- Regular meals and regular exercise are also necessities. When in doubt, carry snacks that sustain you.
- Know your optimal sleep habits. Adequate sleep is absolutely essential, and will often be an influential factor in your work and play plans.
- Vocal Health Supplements: Salt water gargle; Thayer's slippery elm lozenges and spray; Fisherman's Friend cough lozenges; A WARM HAT and SOCKS!

Bureaucracy

We'll use the Google Calendar system for lesson schedule management. Please provide me with your gmail address. I'll invite you to my calendar, and you will have editing ability once your regular lessons are in place.

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I will make every effort to arrange an agreeable lesson time for you. Once I've worked out a typical schedule, it will be posted on the google calendar. If you need to make occasional adjustments, and you see times open and available that are helpful to you, please reschedule your own lesson and alert me by email. I'll confirm the change. If you need time that doesn't appear to be available on the google calendar, email your needs to me and I'll do my best to try to accommodate.

It is your responsibility to register for the appropriate course number, and check that the number of units is accurate.

It is your responsibility to complete a "Repertoire Report Form" each term, including technical exercises and songs. This form is due to me Wednesday of finals week each term. I am required to withhold your grade from the registrar until you complete and submit this form.

When preparing for area recitals, hearings, juries or degree recitals, you must submit a neatly organized list of your repertoire (larger work from which your selection is excerpted, opus numbers, et cet); composer (with dates of birth/death); poet; and accompanist(s)/collaborators. I'm happy to proof read.

At the beginning of each term, I expect you to review your singing commitments with me. I must be informed of any performances, rehearsals or ensembles in which you wish to sing. If you fail to notify me of an engagement, I reserve the right to dismiss you from the studio. This applies equally to any voice teaching commitments you may wish to make. I also appreciate being consulted regarding any demanding extra-curricular activities (sports teams, clubs or theatrical productions) you are considering.

If you are participating in a course or project that includes movement/staging, it is your responsibility to maintain in your personal wardrobe a black outfit: for men, well-fitting and flexible pants with belt, well-fitting shirt (Turtleneck OK) and dance shoes; for women both a calf-length dress/jumper with sleeves and a well-fitting pants outfit, character shoes and flats.

Attendance

Arrive vocally warmed-up for your lesson and for all studio classes (whether or not you're scheduled to sing). At the appointed time please enter and prepare for your lesson quietly while the previous lesson is wrapping up.

If you must cancel a lesson due to illness, you should know and inform me at least 12 hours in

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advance (excepting dire emergency). You may reschedule up to 2 lessons per term, whether for illness or other circumstance. If I become ill or must be away for your regular lesson time, I will likewise reschedule those lessons at our mutual convenience. You must inform me if you will not be present in Studio Class due to illness.

If you are unable to take lessons regularly during the term (for whatever reason) you may either:

- reduce your credit load by filing a petition with the Registrar OR
- receive an Incomplete until the lesson credits are earned.

(latter may require a reduced credit load for the following term)

In the Lesson

This is your time, which I very happily devote especially to your growth and development. You can expect an uninterrupted lesson, with only very occasional exceptions.

Please bring your personal recording device to every lesson. Review the lesson about 24 hours later. Transcribe any exercises and note any new concepts. This process should inform your practice plans for the week, and over time, will help you assess your growth. Further, an up-to-date transcript of exercises will assist you with your end-of-term Repertoire Report Form.

You should be getting in at least FOURS HOURS of practice time on your own for each hour that we spend together. Do not take a new lesson until you have reviewed the previous lesson recording, you have applied the principles, and you are ready for more input from me.

When I assign you a new piece of music for which you must obtain a score, you must do so before the next lesson. If you arrive for your next lesson without the new score, I reserve the right to terminate the lesson. Please note in the appendixes, several locations from which you can purchase and receive most scores immediately.

When you present a new piece to me, it should be prepared to the following standards:

- 1) Word-for-word translation of text with comprehension of meaning.
- 2) IPA when necessary (i.e: italian open/closed E and O).
- 3) Accurate pitches and rhythms.
- 4) Breath Phrasing decisions.

I do expect to help you with some difficult poetic ideas, language syntax, etc.

I do not expect to teach you basic pitches and rhythms.

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The structure of the typical lesson should follow this pattern:

- 1) Brief period of vocalises
- 2) Sing-Through of very familiar song
- 3) Presentation of new material
- 4) Rather Familiar song (if time permits)

In the Practice Room

Learning how to practice efficiently and enjoyably is a VITAL part of your work as a singer. I expect the lesson to assist you in learning how to focus on specific tasks, and I expect that you will guide yourself through the methods that you learn in the lesson, maintaining that systematic structure for practice time.

The following concept is the most important part of my philosophy of practice, and I hope it will inform all of your specific tasks:

YOU LEARN HOW TO DO SOMETHING WELL BY MAKING CORRECT REPETITIONS

- Two or more brief sessions per day are far preferable to one long session.
- Novice students should practice about twenty minutes at a time.
- Intermediate students should practice about 30 minutes at a time.
- Advanced students should not practice more than forty five minutes at a time.

The following concept is the most important part of my philosophy of learning a song, and I hope it will inform all of your specific tasks:

THE COMPOSER EXPECTS YOU TO BRING LINGUISTIC AND EMOTIONAL INTERPRETATION TO THE SONG

Reciting the text should be a regular and frequent preparation to singing. You must be able to recognize and communicate the consonances and dissonances between spoken word stress and the stress chosen by the composer.

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Please use these criteria as you work:

- 1) What are you singing about?**
- 2) What clues are given by the composer?**
- 3) What performance practice might occur that isn't on the page?**
- 4) What is possible for you at this point in your development?**

Remember that much of your work will be non-singing: preceding your actual singing time: Translating, researching the style and related information, studying other works of the same composer... Even if you're unable to practice singing, you can still do important work.

Develop a KEY: a list of aesthetics and methods written in a way that is meaningful and helpful to you. Keep a LOG: a record of events in your practice time. Show me what you're doing with this process at regular intervals.

KEY

Start from the big picture OR the details:

Either —

Create a list of every skill you need to make music/sing/perform, then organize the list into categories that are useful to you,

Or —

List the categories in which you want your performance to be successful, then give the categories specificity by listing each skill that contributes to the goal.

Define methods for achieving each skill

This document will evolve as you do. Your diligence and skill in updating the document will likely mirror your evolving abilities.

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A basic list that may be helpful to you as you define the qualities of singing:

Technique	Vocal Tone	Diction
breathing	clarity	comprehension
posture	resonance	consonants
jaw/face/tongue	intonation	vowels
fioratura	timbre	inflection
vibrato	fluency	clarity
	Musicianship	Overall Performance
	pitch and rhythm accuracy	appropriateness of music
	dynamics	interpretation
	phrasing	appearance
	articulation	vitality
	memorization	stage presence
	appropriate style	

What is the aesthetic of each quality listed? What do YOU do to achieve each of these qualities? Do these qualities overlap in category? Do some qualities belong in other categories?

LOG

- Keep a daily log of your practice times and activities
- Identify events as specifically as is useful to self and PM
- Clarify, define, discuss routines with PM during lesson
- Logs may also be used for narrative, but will not be valued for this

Logs will be assessed for:

Regularity of entry

Specificity of events

Correlation to demonstrated improvement in singing

Usefulness!

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I encourage you to attend the lessons of other students, both in our studio and in the studios of my colleagues. Among our own studio members, you should mention your intentions to the student whose lesson you would like to observe. For all other studios, you should formally request the teacher and student to allow an observation each time you wish to do so.

Any student who feels uncomfortable with this 'open studio' policy should speak with me privately. There will be certain lessons in anyone's progress where the student prefers not to be observed. These occasional needs will be respected.

Submit your observations to me by Wednesday of finals week if you wish these lesson observations to be considered in your grade.

In the World

- I would like all of you to participate in a very active singing life, both on and off campus. I'll keep you aware of contests that may be appropriate. I encourage you to explore your musical interests and develop ways you can share them with audiences (community outreach performing).
- If you are planning to sing or teach music professionally, you should be looking to summer job opportunities that support your career goals.

Read *Classical Singer* magazine, sign up for YAP Tracker, surf the net/chat rooms for singers, and be proactive with me about planning your summer singing jobs. If you haven't done it by early December each year, you'll likely miss your opportunity.

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Guidelines for Grading

You and I will assess using the following criteria. By Wednesday of Finals Week in each term, I expect you to provide me with a written reflection that concludes with a self-assessed grade. I will take your assessment into consideration as I make my own assessment. Please feel free to discuss with me any concerns about this grading process or grades actually assigned by me.

Each student begins with an A, and loses half a letter grade for the following:

Missing/Inadequate key

Inadequate progress with repertoire

Inadequate progress with technique

Missing/Inadequate log

Missing written assignments

Habitual lateness

Habitual absence from Voice Department events

Demonstrating integrity in 'Singer Life,' purchasing scores for your assigned repertoire, and taking increasing responsibility for your musical and vocal development are difficult qualities to quantify, but aspects of your work in the Studio that you should consider regularly. **Average**

progress is not likely to prepare a person for the world of professional singing or teaching.

It is thrilling to watch a person, or to be a person who is working at her/his capacity. My grading is meant to encourage you toward such satisfaction, and to move you toward accurate self-assessment. If you have any concerns about a grade impending or awarded, please speak to me candidly and in a timely fashion.

Written Work

Our work in the voice lesson is integral with your participation in the Music Department, and with your liberal arts education. For that reason I have developed curricula designed to support and enhance undergraduate college requirements. Your written work must demonstrate your critical thinking skills and the correlation between external influences and your own singing. Your submissions will be graded on both content and form.

Term I written work is for Freshmen only, in the form of Performance Review. Your outline will be due not more than 3 days after the performance. Your rough draft will be due one week after I return your outline. Your collected final drafts will be due by Wednesday of finals week. I will provide a list of performances from which you may choose, and strongly recommend that you take brief notes during each concert you attend.

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Term II is Book Report term for everyone. Before the end of Term I, I'll recommend a book for you, or you can choose one from the attached list. Your outline will be due Tuesday of Week 5. I'll return it to you for revision immediately following Mid Term Reading Period. The final draft will be due Wednesday of Finals Week. Some years we may form groups to discuss and prepare presentations.

Term III is the culmination of our year-long video project. Specific guidelines for evaluation follow in this document. You may be assigned to evaluate both your own video and that of another studio member.

Performance Repertoire

The Term Song Plan: I have prepared an anthology of standard classical song repertoire designed to help you develop critical listening and reproduction skills while building your own permanent repertoire. For freshmen, each piece will have an 'ideal' performance for you to emulate. When you can accurately reproduce the diction, phrasing, articulation, dynamic and ornamentation of the 'ideal' performer, you will learn the next piece on the list. One song per term is the minimum requirement. For Sophomores and above, no recording will be provided.

Personalized Repertoire: Each student is encouraged to share her/his interests. I'll be happy to work with you on material you love, and will help you organize it into coherent levels of difficulty. I'll expect you to try out material I suggest, but if you find it undesirable for whatever reason, be sure to let me know. There's more than enough great music for us to agree on!

Weekly Studio Class: You will be scheduled to sing an average of twice each term. Be sure the pianist has a clean copy of your score at least 7 days in advance. You should participate actively in the process of each performer. Presence, preparation, attentiveness and helpfulness are vital.

Performances

All singers have the opportunity to sing at the Voice Department Recitals. I'll recommend individuals on a rotating basis as appropriate for additional opportunities on and off-campus. I welcome your initiative to create and develop performance opportunities as well.

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Collaborators

It is necessary that you develop strong musical and personal relationships with instrumentalists who will assist you in performance. When you are tasked with choosing a collaborator, please keep in mind the following:

- Ask the most competent player first (discuss with me if necessary)
- Clearly state your request (performance date; repertoire; anticipated rehearsal period; payment)
- Set a rehearsal schedule together, with your calendars
- Provide scores at least 7 days before your first rehearsal
- Provide score copies single-sided, 3-hole-punched on both sides and tabbed ID
- TRANSLATIONS MUST BE WORD-FOR-WORD
- Do not expect your collaborator to help you learn pitches and rhythms
- If the collaborator is struggling with pitches and rhythms, politely suggest that you rehearse at a later date, after s/he has prepared
- Rehearse at least once before you present anything to me
- Arrange to have your collaborator attend your lessons

Observe the tenets presented in the document published by the Piano Department.

Caveat

I welcome your assistance in developing studio policies. These guidelines are here to help you, not to constrict you. Try as we may, we are all likely to make mistakes in spite of our best efforts. I promise I won't be afraid to say I'm sorry if I err, and I won't be too proud to try something I haven't thought of yet, if you suggest it first. Please be candid, and keep me aware and informed.

If you feel unclear or uncomfortable about anything pedagogical or procedural, it is your responsibility to let me know. I will do my very best to respond to your concern, and maintain the atmosphere of trust and commitment necessary to both of us and all of us.

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ADDENDA

Year Long Song

The idea is to get an audio-visual document of your development, for you to review and improve upon. I choose the repertoire annually, unless you clear something with me first.

TAPING #1

Spend not more than 90 minutes TOTAL practicing the piece. If you have prepared the whole piece in a general way, you can read it down for the video. If you've worked only on one section, that's fine also.

TAPING #2

Spend an additional 90 minutes on the piece. By this time you should have all the pitches, rhythms and phrasings worked out. Some of you will be off book. We will review this video together immediately to set goals.

TAPING #3

Spend an additional 90 minutes on the piece. By this time you should be off book. If you need it, have your word cue sheet or special musical cues at the ready. We will again review this video immediately following.

ALL SUBSEQUENT RECORDINGS

Each of the next practice segments (which may need less than 90 minutes between recordings) should yield improvements in areas previously identified by you or me as necessary. If you wish to review the video immediately, that's fine, if not, we'll simply continue documenting the development throughout the course of the year

Ideally, recordings beyond the third one are made with a collaborator other than me. This of course implies that you've worked together before making the recording, and that you will continue to work together to develop the piece.

EVALUATION OF RECORDINGS

This is to be submitted to me by Wednesday of Finals Week in Term III.

- Watch your complete set of tapings again, in one sitting, with a fresh, "if I'd never seen her/him before, and I was a NATS adjudicator, what would I write?" Take notes in bullet or brief narrative form. If trends of strength or weakness are obvious and consistent throughout the year, note this. If you discern no recognizable trends, hypothesize about why.

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- Write in narrative form about your current level of performing competence, and your desired goals for the next period of study. Be as specific as possible with the latter - use the list on page 5 of the Studio Handbook as a coach if needed.

Undergraduate Term Curriculum

Each term includes a song assignment, which you are expected to prepare to exact phrasing and interpretation standards, with the help of recordings by master singers. The first three terms are performances I choose for you to emulate. The remain terms are performances you and I agree upon. You may not advance to the new term repertoire until you have mastered and performed the previous term piece.

	Term I	Term II	Term III
Year ONE	Handel <i>Art Thou Troubled?</i>	Schubert <i>An die Musik</i>	Gounod <i>Serenade</i>
Year TWO	Bellini <i>Ma, rendi pur contento</i>	Debussy <i>Romance</i>	Purcell <i>An Evening Hymn</i> Faure <i>Mandoline</i>
Year THREE	Donaudy <i>Spirate, pur</i>	Schumann <i>Du bist wie eine Blume</i>	Brahms <i>Die Mainacht</i>
Year FOUR	Donizetti <i>Amiamo</i>	Musto <i>Litany</i>	Britten <i>Come You Not Fr Newcastle?</i>
Year FIVE	Duparc <i>Chanson triste</i>	Wolf <i>Auch kleine Dinge</i>	

Term I Performance Reviews

Term I written work is for freshmen in the form of Performance Review. Each year I will publish a list of events from which you can choose. I strongly recommend that you take brief notes during each concert you attend. Your outline draft is due not more than 3 days after the performance. I usually request rough drafts and corrections of the younger writers. Each of you is welcome to request my guidance/response at all points in the development of the document. Your final drafts will be due by Tuesday of finals week.

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WHO/WHERE/WHEN: Complete info, as if for a published review.

WHAT: Nature of the presentation. If the title is suggestive enough to provide a starting point for the following, use it. If not, perhaps trying to create a meaningful title would help focus your review.

- What was attempted?
- How ambitious was the chosen task?

HOW:

- Forces employed
- Structure of presentation
- Technical skills
- Supporting materials (program notes, explanations, your previous experience with group/individual)

WHAT VALUE DID IT HAVE:

- To those in attendance
- To the reviewer in particular
- Within the larger world of performance/within human culture

Texts for Term II Review

I will assign you a text each year unless you request a specific book.

We may form reading groups to discuss the books we have in common.

Freshmen:

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

The Inner Game of Tennis

Sports Psyching

A Soprano on Her Head

The Music Lesson

The Singer's Life: Goals and Roles

Robert L. Pirsig

W. Timothy Gallwey

Thomas Tutko & Umberto Tosi

Eloise Ristad

Victor L. Wooten

Clifton Ware

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Sophomore:

On Studying Singing
Vocal Wisdom
Caruso & the Art of Singing
Caruso & Tetrizzini on the Art of Singing
The Inner Voice

Sergius Kagen
G B Lamperti
Fucito & Beyer
Themselves
Renée Fleming

Junior:

Dynamics of the Singing Voice
Principles of Voice Production
Singing: The Mechanism & the Technic
Music, the Brain and Ecstasy
A Spectrum of Voices

Meribeth Bunch
Ingo Titze
William Vennard
Robert Jourdain
Elizabeth Blade-Zeller

Seniors/Supers:

The Performer's Voice
The Last Prima Donna
The American Opera Singer
Great Singers on Great Singing
Composers on Music
The Joy of Music
Cry to Heaven
Effortless Mastery

Meribeth Bunch
Lanfranco Rasponi
Peter G. Davis
Jerome Hines
ed. Sam Morgenstern
Leonard Bernstein
Anne Rice
Kenneth Werner

PLACES TO PROCURE SCORES:

- IF THE MUSIC LIBRARY DOESN'T HAVE IT, PLEASE PUT IN A REQUEST TO HAVE IT PURCHASED. YOU HELP BUILD THE COLLECTION THAT WAY, AND PROVIDE RESOURCES/SAVE TIME FOR OTHERS.

IMSLP (Petrucci OnLine Music Library)
Imslp.org

Classical Vocal Reprints
Glendower Jones, owner
www.classicalvocalrep.com
1 800 298-7474

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Hal Leonard Milwaukee

www.halleonard.com

414 774-3630

www.sheetmusicdirect.com

Educational Music Service

www.emsmusic.com

914 469-5817

Fax only with credit card

mailing address: 13 Elkay Drive

Chester, NY 10918

Phone with credit card

www.loisfyfemusic.com

Lois Fyfe Music (choral specialist)

615 386-3542

SCORE RENTAL/PERUSAL:

Schirmer

212 254-2100 Schirmer (Salabert, others)

45 Bellvale Rd

Chester, NY 109

Arlene Lempka (al@schirmer.com);

Katie Plybon, promotions

Boosey & Hawkes

www.boosey.com

212 358-5300

Presser (Ed. Max Eschig; Enoch&See)

www.presser.com/rental-information

Hal Leonard (Ricordi, Boosey & Hawkes..)

www.halleonard.com

212 358-5306, 01 fax Jonathan perusal; 07 rental

Doblinger, Vienna

www.doblinger-musikverlag.at

ONLINE SOURCES FOR TRANSLATION:

www.recmusic.org

www.lieder.net

www.aria-database.com

www.ipasource.com

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Practice Log Example

A=Aesthetic M=Method

Date _____ Time _____

Subject _____

A _____

M _____

Date _____ Time _____

Subject _____

A _____

M _____

Date _____ Time _____

Subject _____

A _____

M _____

Date _____ Time _____

Subject _____

A _____

M _____

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After Graduation

Momentum and Contacts are critical components to support ABILITY in garnering performance opportunities and reaching for the highest levels of the profession. STAYING POSITIVE IS ESSENTIAL. Avoid second-guessing, hyper-strategizing, and ruminating! Control what you can (your material, your preparation, your love of sharing a performance), and forget about the rest.